



Milwaukee County Board

Supervisor Deanna Alexander, 18th District

For Immediate Release – July 1, 2015
Bill Zaferos, Public Information Manager
414/278-4230 William.zaferos@milwaukeecountywi.gov

ATU Strike Puts Public Safety and Low Income Workers at Risk

Milwaukee County Supervisor Deanna Alexander today issued a statement on the Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) strike:

“The Milwaukee County Board has been very supportive of our bus system and driver concerns. Hearing that ATU leaders cut off service to the community and then placed blame for this discomfort on elected officials is irritating—it was the union that pulled that trigger.

“This is a major public safety concern and I can hardly believe that the ATU would choose to take the thousands of people drinking at Summerfest hostage during this strike, increasing the risk that those who can’t find a bus they are accustomed to relying on, may get behind the wheel.

“I encourage the Milwaukee County Sheriff’s Office to commit special attention to highway safety during this strike and I am grateful that taxicabs and rideshare services Uber and Lyft have committed to pick up the slack while the ATU punches off the clock to hold a temper tantrum.

“Further, the working poor, disabled, and senior citizens totally dependent on public transit to get to work and make ends meet will bear the true punishment doled out by the ATU during this strike. Workers will face lost wages and potentially lost jobs when they can’t get to work. I am glad to hear that some churches and community organizations are stepping in to provide transportation where the ATU is leaving Milwaukee stranded.

“This service stoppage also creates a critical revenue loss that could have funded some of the pay increases the ATU is demanding from MCTS. The ATU’s demands for about \$8 million more in wages over two years would essentially require the County to raise taxes to the fullest extent allowed by law and then to direct 100 percent of the increase to that extorted expense.

“We should all be focused on providing safe, efficient public transit to love and I am very disappointed that the ATU has chosen to hurt transit riders just to further their bargaining position, as if management has not been making a good faith effort to reach a position both sides can agree to.

“The County Board, the County Executive, and MCTS management all respect bus drivers and support our transit system, and I look forward to hearing when a deal has been reached so we can be assured the ATU will no longer be directing workers off the job.”

#